

August 5, 1954

FDD Exploitation of Southeast Asia Language Materials

Following is a round-up of SEA country requirements elicited from the analysts of the SEA Branch of State/DRF. This summary for Burma, Indonesia, Thailand and Malaya, the Philippines, Indochina, and for psychological intelligence, was obtained in response to the following general questions:

1. To what extent are the branch intelligence activities of your area dependent upon the exploitation of Southeast Asian languages?
2. What could we expect to achieve if we had the use of additional Burmese, Indonesian, Malayan, Vietnamese, Chinese, Tagalog, and Thai materials as well as those in French, Dutch, Spanish, etc?
3. What available foreign language publications are worth "exploiting?" What ones are presently being covered?
4. What State-supported and what other language facilities besides FDD are available to us?
- 25X1A 5. What has been FDD's performance? How do the quality and quantity of FDD's [REDACTED] compare in usefulness to radio-monitored material, press monitoring, etc?
6. What specific topics, for which foreign language materials might be of value, are apt to be of special relevance to your country in terms of future programming, i.e. a 6-months' period with respect to the regular program, and one year for the NIS program?

Burma

1. The exploitation of Burmese language materials will be more important to the forthcoming NIS studies than it is at present for the bulk of current intelligence requirements (due to the relatively widespread use of English within the Burmese leadership and the unavoidable time lag between usual current intelligence requirements and the availability of FDD products). Future developments, however, may create a greater need than now exists for access to materials in Chinese and in some of the minor languages of Burma (Karen, Kachin) for current intelligence work.

Additional exploitation of Burmese language materials would, in many cases, permit greater precision, or refinement, in intelligence judgments. Particularly with respect to "psychological intelligence" needs, greater availability of Burmese-language editorials, and books and pamphlets circulating in Burma (including Communist publications) would be of considerable value.

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2. USIS press translations and summaries, and a British press summary supplement FDD translation facilities. FDD products compare favorably with other radio and press monitoring. The only radio in Burma is government-owned, and, therefore, although valuable for official news and views, does not provide an adequate sample of local opinion. USIS news summaries do not purport to be comprehensive with respect to any one subject. Value of past FDD releases to DRF has varied widely -- a number of fine jobs, many not very useful. The latter deficiency is probably due partly to DRF failure to frame specific requirements. Responses to past requests have been helpful. There is a general lack of knowledge in DRF, however, of FDD capabilities and resources. (The recent list of publications received by FDD is helpful and it is suggested it be issued periodically for purposes of information and comment.)
3. The priority requirements are political rather than economic. Most of the available economic data is believed to come in English language sources. However, part of the Burma Labor Gazette is in Burmese, and the contents of that section are not known. With respect to the forthcoming MIS Manpower Section, the analysts are interested in labor force statistics (by industry, sex, etc.), employment and unemployment statistics, and government labor policy.

The Burma Government Gazette could be exploited more. The analyst suggests that FDD systematically screen and periodically provide a list of contents by title or explanatory statement, so specific requests could be made for additional abstracts or translation. Such a listing would also provide the analysts with a summary survey of legislation.

Exploitation of obtainable Communist propaganda material and of government counter-propaganda would be helpful. DRF is interested in both Communist directives and overt propaganda.

Other requirements include:

- a) surveys of Burmese attitudes on SEA regional organizations, relations with Communist China,
  - b) Burmese public responses to government policies such as welfare program (Pydiaawtha), internal security, including proposed compulsory national service plan, Karen government and politics,
  - c) political overtones to Sixth World Buddhist Council
4. Suggested additional publications for exploitation:
- a) Myawaddy, a magazine containing government counter-propaganda, reportedly being used in the Army's indoctrination program.

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- b) Burma Labor Gazette
- c) Pyidaw Thit, Burmese-language magazine, Communist publication
- d) Jen Min Pao, Chinese-language daily, Rangoon

Thailand

1. Current intelligence needs are reasonably well met from English-language materials, plus Thai and Chinese-language materials presently covered in one form or another. The principal gaps are believed to be in terms of coverage of local press and propaganda materials, including information media important within the Chinese community, as indicators of trends in current Thai attitudes toward both internal and external problems.
2. Language facilities available, other than FDD, are Embassy daily news summaries and weekly press comments (Thai), occasional British press surveys, the Siam Rath Weekly Review (which prints extracts from Thai-language press), a USIS weekly review of the Bangkok Chinese press and privately published translations of the Government Gazette. Press-monitoring services are fairly good for coverage of specific political developments but are less useful for surveying attitudes of various groups within the country. The Radio (Government-owned) is useful only for official news and views, plus editorials of major Bangkok dailies.

FDD contributions have been useful in frequently providing useful background data and "local color" which help fill out picture, but generally have not been relied on for a major contribution to total intelligence flow.

3. Problems of interest to DRF:
  - a) what do the Thai think of their international position, in the light of developments in Indochina? (Indicators of what the Thai think their position and prospects are -- are they on the right side or should they be on no side?)
  - b) Activities within the Chinese community
  - c) Information in the defense program, military training
  - d) Specific responses to US policies and actions in SEA
4. Comments on publications exploited by FDD:
  - a) Thamathioat unimportant, circulation almost nil.
  - b) Suggested additional newspapers:

- 1) Siam Rath, daily, Bangkok, popular with intellectuals and students.
- 2) San Seri, daily, Bangkok, General Sarit's paper.
- 3) Kiattisak, daily, Bangkok, opposition paper
- 4) Some newspaper from Chiangmai, since that press is no longer covered by any available summaries.
- 5) General Phao is reportedly sponsoring a new Chinese-language paper, title unknown, which should be quite important.

Indonesia and Malaya

1. Since no basic research is being done on these areas at present, very little dependence is placed on SEA language materials. The time lag is generally too great for the bulk of the type of work now being done. Additional materials are not required at present.
2. FDD already covers most of the important materials for Indonesia. For Malaya, the British issue numerous press summaries, etc.
- 25X1A 3. Supplementing FDD are the State Department's translating center and [REDACTED]
4. FDD performance has been very good in general. However, the present type of functional reports on a worldwide basis are not of much use. The former reports, done on area basis, were more useful. The functional reports seem to be the major criticism.
- 25X1A 5. No specific requirements over long term. Specific requests have been made from time to time and the responses have been most useful. FDD keeps the analysts informed on new materials of possible interest. [REDACTED] is more useful in general to current work.
6. Suggested additional publication: Pedoman, one of the more important and influential newspapers.

Philippines

1. Overall dependence on language materials not great. Most of the basic information is available in English.
2. FDD already covers the newspaper Bagong Buhay, which is the most worthwhile for exploitation. This paper is the most influential and largest vernacular daily and the only daily Tagalog paper.
3. FDD is the primary source for SEA-language materials on the Philippines.

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1. FDD performance has been improving. The FDD staff tries to minimize the time lag for specially requested material by sending over carbons before final editing and publishing in FDD. The functional reports, issued on a worldwide basis, are not very useful. They contain factual material duplicated in English sources.
5. Requirements are primarily for current intelligence functions, since the NIS program is not yet under way. The principal usefulness to be gained from exploitation of the Dagong Buhay is its editorial policy, e.g., its support or criticism of government policies and its stand on issues involving the US. In addition, the following type of information is useful: exclusive feature items providing information on outlying provincial areas; first-hand reports of government settlement areas for former Huks, appraisals of congressional sessions, the work of national government executive departments, provincial governors and governments; and political developments relating to party activities in individual provinces.

Economic requirements from language materials are negligible, since the information available in English-language sources is adequate.

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Personal relationships with FDD are very good, and the above requirements have already been conveyed to [REDACTED] of FDD by memo.

#### Indochina

1. The current intelligence program of the Branch depends less on the exploitation of SEA-language materials than the NIS program.
2. There is a general lack of knowledge of what materials are available for exploitation, and a feeling that the materials could yield additional returns for NIS analysts. Additional language materials might be especially useful for work on Laos, Cambodia, and the "Democratic Republic of Vietnam" (DRV).
3. Official journals or gazettes, especially from Laos and Cambodia, probably would yield information not now available. In addition, useful general background information, primarily of a political or sociological nature, is believed available in French-language sources. However, it is noted from recent information that the laws of Laos will henceforth be printed only in Laotian and not in French as heretofore.
1. In addition to FDD, [REDACTED] and the State Department's translating center perform valuable functions on language materials for Indochina.
5. FDD products have been very useful for basic research, while other sources generally have greater value for current intelligence needs.

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6. Requirements concern mainly Laos, Cambodia, and the DRV. (Most of the materials now being exploited concern the State of Vietnam.) For Laos and Cambodia, French-language materials can be a valuable source. (Also, can the Thai translator read Laotian?) For the DRV, the main problem seems to be procurement of materials. Official materials for all three countries, dealing with government organization and operations (central and local), personnel shifts, governmental reorganizations, basic legislation, decrees and legislation, government policies and program, summaries of government operations, etc. would be most useful to the NIS analysts. In addition, political party tracts noting party programs, activities, and membership, might fill some of the current gaps in information. Additional information on postwar political developments is always welcome.

With reference to Laos, FDD has not produced many reports, but the few available have been useful. The following publications are suggested for exploitation: (a) Lan Xang, Laotian-language, bi-weekly at Vientiane; (b) La Voix du Peuple, French language, bi-monthly at Pakse; and (c) Khao Kham Khosana, Laotian-language, government information bulletin of the Information Ministry at Vientiane. It is also believed that the Government of Laos issues, in Laotian or French, proceedings of the National Assembly, and an official gazette (Bulletin Administratif du Laos (?) or Journal Officiel (?) in French which would be worth exploiting.

The following topics concerning Laos are of particular interest: (1) speeches inaugurating important national and foreign policies by the Prime Minister and other cabinet ministers, and (2) any statutes relating to penal law and the regulation of the National Police and gendarmerie and the prison system.

With reference to the DRV, exploitation of Phan Dan (the Lao Dong Party organ) and Cua Quoc (paper of the Lien Viet Front) should yield useful information with respect to DRV leaders, programs, policies, government organization and processes. Government decrees and regulations, and propaganda directed to the Vietnamese would also be most useful.

With reference to Cambodia, in addition to the more general requirements stated above, any information on Son Ngoc Thanh, whether of a background or current nature, would be useful, e.g., for a few months in early 1952, he put out a weekly Cambodian language newspaper, Khmer Krangk (Cambodian Awakening), which still would be worth exploiting. In addition, French-language source materials sometimes carry useful articles on Thanh.

The major economic requirement with respect to all the areas of Indochina concerns labor -- general working conditions, union organization, strikes, etc.

7. Suggest exploitation of some publication from Laos (see above). DRF also received France-Asie and France-Indochine (French), which contain useful articles.

### Psychological Intelligence

The psychological intelligence functions of the Branch, with particular reference to Burma, Indochina, and Thailand, probably could derive considerable advantages from the exploitation of additional SEA-language materials. It is believed that FDD products could be especially useful to analysts in the preparation of year-end assessments of (1) the increase or decrease of Communist effort in an area, and (2) the change in Communist themes during that time. At present the Branch has little basis for judging either the quantity or quality of Communist materials (e.g. what do the Burmese Communists say to the Burmese?).

The responsible analyst would also like to see more background material translated, e.g., on culture, societal life, etc. -- subjects which may not have immediate political importance but are necessary for purposes of judging receptivity of local populations to various types of propaganda effort, and are of longer-range political interest (e.g., article on Son Ngoc Thanh of Cambodia in October 1952 issue of the French-language Indochine).

The Branch is also interested in Communist materials of foreign origin in SEA languages, e.g., Soviet and Chinese publications such as Viet Minh information bulletins issued in Rangoon and Bangkok (the one in Rangoon used to be in English, but now may be in Burmese).